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THE SENSES OF SIGHT AND SMELL OF THE WILD TURKEY AND THE COMMON DEER.

BY J. D. CATON.

It is claimed for the wild turkey that it has the quickest and most accurate sight of any known animal. It is a saying among old hunters that it can detect the human eye looking through a knot-hole from the inside of a hollow tree. I once observed an incident illustrative of its remarkable power of sight, and tending to show that its apprehension of scent is correspondingly dull.

In December, 1847, I was hunting deer on the Vermilion River, and had been following one from daylight till three o'clock in the afternoon, over the breaks and bluffs of the Vermilion River, through six inches of dry hard snow, almost as difficult to walk in as dry corn-meal. When near the foot of the bluff, not far below the mouth of Deer Park, some distance off, I saw a flock of wild turkeys crossing the river on the ice, and coming directly towards me. My ambition immediately fell from a deer to a turkey. I concealed myself in a very dense thicket of underbrush, and soon heard the turkeys approaching with that contented *quit, quit*, in which they frequently give expression to a happy sense of security. My pointer, which was as good at following a deer as a grouse, stood at my feet without moving a muscle, though his eyes shone like balls of fire when he scented the turkeys and heard them pass by. They passed, I should judge by the noise, not more than fifty or sixty feet from me, without taking the least alarm. About fifty yards distant there was a bare spot of considerable extent, near the brow of the bluff to which their course would evidently take them, where I promised myself a sure shot. I rested my gun against a small tree that I might make no perceptible motion before

firing. All but my head and arms was concealed by the bushes, even from the elevated position where I expected they would come in sight, and from an observation on a level with myself I was entirely concealed. I thus stood, anxiously listening to the birds, and so was enabled to notice their progress, and thus determine at what moment to expect their appearance in the open space. The first that appeared was the head and neck of the old cock that led the flock. It seemed as if he raised his head for the express purpose of looking at me, for the instant his head appeared he stared fixedly towards me, and gave the loud quick note of alarm. In a second or two he took wing, followed by the rest of the flock. I still think he was in a little doubt, else he would not have remained an instant after seeing me, and when he did fly, instead of going directly away, he passed near enough over me to satisfy his doubts.

The eyes of the turkey are so situated as to embrace within the range of vision a very large field. Here we see the sight was very quick if not absolutely certain. Although they had passed very near us, the sense of smell had given them no intimation of our presence.

While I stood there, my gun still resting against the tree, deeply chagrined at what I supposed the last chance for game that day, for I was too much fatigued to track farther, I heard the brush crack, and in an instant the largest buck with the largest horns I ever saw, stopped not more than thirty or forty feet from me. While I could distinctly make out his form, the bushes were too thick to allow the hope that I could reach him with a bullet. My only chance was to wait till he should pursue his course, which would bring him through a short space where the bushes were lower, and I might get a shot on the bound when his body would be above them. He stared at me some seconds, as if something told him of danger; but at length he seemed to become reassured, and bounded along in his original course as if he was in somewhat of a hurry, but not in manifest alarm. As

I anticipated, on his third or fourth bound he gave me a chance, and I fired as he was descending. His heels flew into the air with a snap as if his hoofs would fly off, and he fell all in a heap. There was something in the size of the deer and of his horns, the way in which his hind legs, as quick as lightening, stretched almost perpendicularly in the air, and the mode of his falling, which produced a thrill of delight which I have never before or since experienced. I reloaded as quickly as possible and approached the spot where he fell. The first sight told what was the matter. He had raised himself on his forefeet, and was looking fiercely around for an enemy, every hair on his shoulders and neck standing forward, and his eyes glaring with the ferocity of a demon. All behind his shoulders appeared quite inanimate and as wilted as a rag. His backbone was severed just behind his shoulders. It took another shot in the head to induce him to let me bleed him. By the time this was done, a little old man, with a rifle on his shoulder, made his way through the bushes to where I stood, and looked at my trophy in a most disconsolate way. At length he remarked, without taking the least notice of my salutation, "Well, you have got him." To this manifest truth I assented, and asked him to help *shue* the deer around that he might bleed the better, as he was rather heavy for one to handle. "Excuse me," said he, "I have been following that rascal ever since daylight. I am a good way from home with no time to spare;" and away he hurried before I had time to offer to divide the venison with him. Probably that is not the only instance in which one has lost a supper by being in too great haste.

Although the deer had his attention arrested by the scent, and in full view of my entire form, and of the dog standing at my feet, yet from not seeing the least motion, he could not make us out.